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Six women preachers, in *Middlesex, Kent, Cambridgshire, and Salisbury.*

VVith a relation of their names,
manners, life, and doctrine, pleasant to be
read, but horrid to be judged of

Their Names are these.

and others

<i>Anne Hempstall.</i>	<i>Susan May.</i>
<i>Mary Bilbrow.</i>	<i>Elizab. Bancroft.</i>
<i>Ioane Bauford.</i>	<i>Arabella Thomas.</i>

I Cor. 14. 34, 35.

Let your women keepe silence in the Churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speake, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the Law.

And if they will learne any thing, let them aske their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speake in the Church.

Printed, 1641.

DISCOVERIE



Printed 1641



The six women Preachers.

Anne Hempstall,
Joan Banford
Elizabeth Bancroft,

} and {

Mary Bilbrowe,
Susan May,
Arabella Thomas.



IN ancient times have I read of Prophetesses, but not untill of late heard of women Preachers, their onely reason or cause of preaching was, that there was a deficiency of good men, wherefore it was but fit, that vertuous women should supply their places, they were (men they did mean) good for nothing, but to make their texts good by expounding the language of the Beast, but they themselves would preach nothing, but such things as the spirit should move them.

The first and chief of this female and Sacerdoticall function, was one *Anne Hempstall*, living in the Parish of *Saint Andrews Holborne*, neere *London*, and in the County of *Middlesex*, upon a certain time, she having a minde, said shee was moved to be zealously affected, called an assembly

of her bibbing Gossips together, whose thoughts were bent more upon the strong water bottle, then upon the uses or doctrines which their holy sister intended to expound unto them, but being come to the house of this *Anne Hempstall*, zealous *Nan* spake to them after this manner.

Beloved sisters, this last night I dreamed a strange Dream, moreover me thought I saw a vision, in which *Anna* the Prophetesse was presented unto my view, the splendour of whose countenance did cast me into a trance, wherein I lay untill the next morning, and the morning being come, I could conceive no interpretation of my Dream but this, that I should imitate godly *Anna*, by preaching unto you, as shee prophesied to others, her speech strook them all into an astonishment, at which, this prophane *Anne* cryed out, Now doth the holy Ghost descend downe upon you, Wherefore give eare unto mee, then did she begin to talke, and speak unto them that which first came into her minde, but the chiefe matter of her Text was this, That womans haire was an adorning to her, but for a man to have long haire, it was a shame unto him, which the Scripture it selfe cryed sic upon; long did shee preach, and longer I dare avouch then some of the audience were willing, for some of them had as far home as White Chappell, wherefore her longitude might cause a brevitude of her sucking the *Aquavita* bottle; two houres being expired, and the bottom of the stool beginning to look open-mouthed with her furious stamps, shee gave them

them as much peace as in her lay, and so concluded.

Mary Bilbrowe, one of the audience, being of the Parish of Saint *Giles* in the Fields, desired them to be all with her the next morning, and after Sermon, they should have a good fat pig to breakfast, besides a cup of Sack or Claret to wash it down, they all agreed unto it, and making use of all the Rhetorick which they were borne unto, they gave her thanks, and so for that time a Bottle of Ale or two being devoured, they departed every one to their owne houses. The next morning, they met altogether at the house of *Mary Bilbrowe*, whose husband was a good honest Bricklayer, and so soon as they came within the doores of her house, shee brought them all into her Parlour as shee called it, and instead of stools and cushions, shee had provided before hand, three bricks a piece for them to sit upon, her reason was this, shee thought they would not sit much, because women to good instructions love standing, her Pulpit was framed very substantially of brick, so high, that scarce any thing, but her standing up tippet could be seen, she began there very devoutly to make an *ex tempore* prayer, but before shee had scarce spoke twenty words, her daughter came running in very hastily, telling her a Gentleman at *Bloomsbury* staid to speake with her about urgent occasions, which hearing, shee leapt out of her prayer into this serious meditatio, I think it be the Gentleman I was withall at *Salisbury*.

bury Court, whom I promised this day to meet with all, whereupon shee left her Pulpit, spread the cloth, and brought her Gossips in a pig according to her promise, who fed heartily, and so departed, so much at this time for *Middlesex* female Teachers.

Now give mee leave to take water, and goe to *Gravesend*, and so further into *Kent*, where I shall tell you of one *Joan Bausford* in the Town of *Feverisham*, who taught in *Feverisham*, that husbands being such as crossed their wives wils might lawfully be forsaken.

Then was there one *Susan May* of *Ashford* in the County of *Kent* also which preached in a Barne there, that the Devill was the father of the Pope, The Pope the father of those which did weare Surplices, wherefore consequently the Devill was the Father of all those which did not love Puritans.

There was likewise one *Elizabeth Bancroft* in *Ely* in *Cambridgshire*, where Bishop *Wren* first going to place Altars there, preached behind the minister upon a Saturday, that it was fit upon Sunday to Sacrifice the Popes Bird upon his own Altar.

Then lastly there was one *Arabella Thomas* a Welch woman, which lived in the City of *Salisbury*, which preached, and in her Sermon said that none but such painfull creatures as her selfe should goe to Heaven, for those Ministers which did not preach twice upon every Sabbath day, shee said that very shortly the black Raven by day, and the white

(5)

white Owle by night should scratch out their eyes.

Thus have I declared some of the female Academies, but where their Vniversity is I cannot tell, but I suppose that Bedlam or Bridewell would be two convenient places for them, is it not sufficient that they may have the Gospell truly and sincerely Preached unto them, but that they must take their Ministers office from them? if there had been such a dearth of the Gospell as there was in the Reigne of *Queene Mary* it had beene an occasion some what urgent, But God bee prayed it was not so, but that they seemd to bee ambitious, and because they would have superiority, they would get upon a stoole, or in a tubb instead of a pulpit. At this time I have described but six of them, ere long I feare I shall relate more, I pray God I have no cause, and so for this time I conclude.

FINIS.